

# First Congregational United Church of Christ

May 14, 2023



Dedication of Paul and Barnabas by Frank Wesley

6th Sunday of Easter

Ministers: All who are a part of this church

Pastor: Rev. Enno K. Limvere

Musician: Karina Roth

Choir Director: Ann Russ

Peace Candle Lighter: Ann Russ

Liturgist: Bruce Tyler

**Gathering Music**

**Words of Welcome**

**Prelude**

## **Words to Enter Worship (Based on Isaiah 66)**

***People who love mothers:*** Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at God's word: Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came upon her, she delivered a son. Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things?

***People who are mothers:*** Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor, she delivered her children. Shall I open the womb and not deliver? says the LORD; shall I, the one who delivers, shut the womb? says your God.

***People who love like mothers:*** Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her— that you may nurse and be satisfied from her consoling breast, that you may drink deeply with delight from her glorious bosom.

***People who celebrate women:*** For thus says the LORD: I will extend prosperity to her like a river and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream, and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm and bounced on her knees. As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

## **Opening Hymn            #1 Immortal, Invisible God only Wise**

- 1     Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
      In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
      Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
      Almighty, victorious, your great name we praise.
- 2     Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
      Not wanting, not wasting, but ruling in might;  
      Your justice like mountains high soaring above,  
      Your clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
- 3     Your life is lifegiving, to both great and small;  
      In all life you're living, the true life of all;  
      We blossom and flourish as leaves and as flowers,  
      Then wither and perish but naught dims your powers.
- 4     So perfect your glory, so brilliant your light,  
      Your angels adore you, all veiling their sight;  
      All praise we now render as your angels do:  
      In awe at the splendor of light hiding you.

## **Words of Lament**

**Merciful God, women are second class citizens in our society and around the world. They are deemed to be lesser, weaker, and incompetent. Religions, gov-**

ernments, and cultures limit their voices, their choices, and their worth, but not all... Rise up, Mother to us all, and knock such foolish notions from our world. Help us to hear their voices, respect their choices, and realize their worth. Heal your world, only as a Mother can. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Time of Silence

## Words of Poetry & Lighting the Candle of Peace

It is a custom in our congregation to light our Peace Candle during worship, as a witness to the Prince of Peace and our communal intention to be peace-makers as a Just Peace Church.

### Into the Mist

by Rev. Enno K. Limvere

“Let us create humans in our image,  
in the image of God let us create them.”  
Wait, what, us, who is us? Isn't God one?  
“Male and female let us create them.”

Is not God sitting on a throne,  
Is not God with robes and a beard?  
Creator, King, Judge, and Fury,  
is not God the Father, praise and cheered?  
God of many names, also called Mother,  
God of mercy, God of tender heart.  
You are the beginning, in you is the end,  
you weave all things together; we are never apart.  
How can we fully know, O God,  
who or what you really are?  
You are close as the next breath,  
And as distant as the farthest star.  
Into the mist, you invite us there,  
to explore, to journey, to be still.  
Be still and listen, be still and know,  
In silence, there, find you, we will.

## Passing of the Peace

## Scripture Readings

**1<sup>st</sup> Scripture** John 14:15-21 (New Revised Standard Version Update Edition)

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father/  
Mother, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This is the

Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

<sup>18</sup> “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father/Mother, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me, and those who love me will be loved by my Father/Mother, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

**2<sup>nd</sup> Scripture** Acts 17:22-31 (Common English Bible)

<sup>22</sup> Paul stood up in the middle of the council on Mars Hill and said, “People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. <sup>23</sup> As I was walking through town and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown God.’ What you worship as unknown, I now proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn’t live in temples made with human hands. <sup>25</sup> Nor is God served by human hands, as though he needed something, since he is the one who gives life, breath, and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one person God created every human nation to live on the whole earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God made the nations so they would seek him, perhaps even reach out to him and find him. In fact, God isn’t far away from any of us. <sup>28</sup> In God we live, move, and exist. As some of your own poets said, ‘We are his offspring.’

<sup>29</sup> “Therefore, as God’s offspring, we have no need to imagine that the divine being is like a gold, silver, or stone image made by human skill and thought. <sup>30</sup> God overlooks ignorance of these things in times past, but now directs everyone everywhere to change their hearts and lives. <sup>31</sup> This is because God has set a day when he intends to judge the world justly by a man he has appointed. God has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

**Children’s Message**                      Worshipping

**Choir**                                        **Restless Weaver**

**Message**                                    The Unknown God of Love

**Musical Reflections**

**Communion Hymn**    **#341 Great Spirit God** (verses 1 & 2, 5-7)

1     Great Spirit God, the things which are yours are numerous and great. The heavens above you set in their place, and earth received its form by your hands. The ocean depths respond to your will, for you can do all things.

- 2 Your will, mysterious and so strong, brings growth to all the earth. Food for our souls and clothing to wear, are like your cup that blesses and fills. Provide for us each day of our lives sufficient for all our needs.
- 5 Your sacrament entrusted to us,  
Jesus, now share with me.  
Your bread of life and drink  
for our souls,  
which you have offered,  
purify now.  
Sanctify minds and bodies to you;  
restore us by your love.
- 6 “Take now my flesh as food for your soul,”  
these are your words, O Christ.  
“Take my shed blood and drink from my cup,  
that it may serve to strengthen your faith.”  
Entrance into your door I desire;  
Jesus, now hear my plea.
- 7 Your plan for our salvation, O God,  
grant to my sinful soul.  
Beyond the heavens is your great bode;  
all goodness is secure in your hands.  
This life divine which you gave to me  
is one that has no end.

## **Communion**

### **Joys and Concerns, Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father, Mother God, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

### **News of God at Work in our Congregation & Community**

## **Our Time of Giving**

### **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Alleluia, alleluia  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

### **Closing Hymn**

### **#242 The Strife is O'er**

#### **Refrain:**

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- 1 The strife is o'er, the battle done, the victory of life is won; The song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!
- 2 The powers of earth have done their worst, but Christ their legions has dispersed: Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!
- 3 The three sad days are quickly sped, Christ rises glorious from the dead: All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!
- 4 Christ, by your wounds on Calvary from death's dread sting your servants free, That we may live eternally. Alleluia! (Refrain)

### **Benediction**

### **Sending Music**